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PRESS RELEASE

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U.S. Embassy, SIFE Nigeria and First City Monument Bank (FCMB) partner to “greenify” Nigeria one state at a time

Responding to the challenges and hardship caused by desertification in Katsina state, the U.S. Embassy, First City Monument Bank (FCMB) in partnership with SIFE Nigeria, have teamed up with Service to Humanity, a non-governmental organization in Katsina state to develop an integrated project (Evergreen) that would address this problem in a sustainable way.

This is the first year the U.S. Embassy is participating in this now two-year old project. We are pleased to partner with the original supporters of this program including FCMB and SIFE Nigeria. Building on the success of last year's and the current program in Katsina state, in 2013 women and youth from Sokoto state will also be participants.

The Evergreen project addresses the challenges of deforestation and desert encroachment by training participants on the production, use and commercialization of briquettes, an environmentally friendly alternative to gas, kerosene and coal.

These environmental challenges directly impact the sources of livelihood, perpetuate poverty in the community and lead to a low quality of life and standard of living for many Nigerians. The project presents a unique opportunity to implement an integrated strategy that addresses these challenges whilst providing economic empowerment for the beneficiaries and encouraging environmental sustainability.

BACKGROUND

The first phase of Evergreen was implemented in 2011. A total of two hundred and fifty (250) project beneficiaries were recruited from ten (10) communities from Kaita and Mai Adua Local Government Areas of Katsina state and trained on the production, use and commercialization of briquettes. Briquettes are blocks of [flammable matter](#) used to start and maintain a [fire](#). Briquettes are made from agricultural waste and are a good alternative to fuel such as gas, kerosene firewood and coal.

The project beneficiaries were also trained on the use and management of the Save80 stoves. The Save80 is an energy efficient stove that reduces the amount of energy consumed by the traditional cooking methods by at least 80 per cent. At the end of the training sessions, briquette machines and 250 units of the Save80 stoves were distributed to successful project beneficiaries. This was done to further encourage attitudinal change towards the environment.

To expand the reach and deepen the project impact in Katsina state in 2012 and also, to ensure its sustainability, a “train-the-trainer” approach was applied to conduct training for two hundred (200) new project beneficiaries.

Relevant information about U.S. policies and programs in Nigeria can be found on our website:
<http://nigeria.usembassy.gov>, and www.usaid.gov/ng



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To achieve this, one hundred of the most successful project beneficiaries from the first phase in 2011 were engaged and trained to serve as facilitators in the training of an additional 200 project beneficiaries (women and youth) in 2012.

2013 PLANS

Going into 2013, the Evergreen project will be extended to Sokoto state with the following objectives:

1. Implement an integrated strategy that addresses the challenge of desert encroachment, loss of livelihood and unemployment in the target community in Sokoto State.
2. Organize an environmental campaign and awareness program to promote environmental sustainability and educate the people about the course and effect of tree felling.
3. Implement training workshops to empower 100 unemployed youths (women) with vocational skills that will make them economically active and financially independent.
4. Conduct skills acquisition training on the production, use and commercialization of briquettes for the target audience.
5. Distribute briquette machines and save 80 stoves as a means of reducing the dependence on wood as cooking fuel.
6. Provide grants for successful project participants to establish small scale businesses as a means of alleviating grass roots poverty.

Seeing the impact of the “train-the-trainer” model adopted in the second phase of the project implementation in Katsina state with respect to community involvement and project sustainability in Katsina state, the train-the-trainer model will also be replicated in Sokoto state.

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